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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-sixth year

Identical letters dated 16 November 2011 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

We write to express our condemnation of and objection to a continuing series of unilateral and illegal measures that are being taken by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Less than 24 hours after the Quartet met again separately with Palestinian and Israeli delegations in an attempt to forge a way forward for the resumption of credible peace negotiations, Israel, the occupying Power, once again proves its staunch commitment to entrenching its illegitimate occupation, in blatant rejection of the international consensus and in defiance of its obligations under international law.

On Tuesday, 15 November 2011, the Israeli Ministry of Housing illegally offered 2,548 settlement units and land plots for sale and subsidized long-term rentals in illegal settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, most of them in Occupied East Jerusalem. This is an illegal step that is yet another clear demonstration of the determined efforts of the occupying Power to further entrench its belligerent occupation of Palestine at the expense of peace and international credibility. In this regard, there can be no doubt that the increased rate of illegal settlement construction in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially in and around East Jerusalem, is in large part due to the international community's failure to hold Israel accountable for its violations and grave breaches over many decades.

The most recent illegal settlement tenders have been announced in the midst of Israel's systematic efforts to cleanse Occupied East Jerusalem of its indigenous Palestinian population, thus altering its demographic composition and cultural character. A case in point is Ammar Badriah, a Jerusalemite, who was recently stripped of his residency rights in his city, as were his wife and three daughters: Wafa (13), Qamar (8) and Iyan (4). Aside from denying Ammar his basic right to reside in the city, the occupying Power is also forcing him to pay approximately $300,000 in retroactive fines. Such an illegal, inhumane measure is intended to

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financially ruin this family while also banning it from its centre of life, a fate suffered by thousands of Palestinian families who have been displaced and dispossessed by Israel's illegal policies vis-à-vis the Palestinian inhabitants of Occupied East Jerusalem.

In this connection, we must draw attention to the fact that Israel's illegal policy of home demolition is also intensifying. On Tuesday, 15 November 2011, Israeli forces demolished four homes in Al-Diyouk Al-Tihta area, west of the city of Jericho, and banned the families from returning to the area to collect their belongings. The occupying Power has also announced plans to demolish another 30 homes in this area. Such demolitions are part of Israel's decades-old policy to empty the Jordan Valley and other areas of the West Bank of its Palestinian residents. In fact, this policy was recently reviewed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In August 2011, the Office warned that "in the absence of concrete policy changes ... some of these communities may disintegrate and disappear altogether over the course of the next generation, or sooner". It also warned: "This possibility, along with the other patterns of Palestinian displacement and Israeli settlement activity in Area C, gives rise to concerns over demographic shifts and changes to the ethnic make-up of the West Bank".

In addition to these illegal and destructive policies, the occupying Power continues its practice of actively denying the most basic human rights of the Palestinian civilian population under its occupation. The range of such malicious policies is wide and the impact is severe on all human rights and affects all segments of the population. In this regard, in addition to continuing its inhumane blockade of the Gaza Strip, in collective punishment of the entire civilian population, Israel continues to launch military attacks against the Gaza Strip, with abject disregard for human life and the safety of civilians in this densely populated territory. In a recent Israeli air strike, one person was killed and the head of the Gaza consular branch of the French General Consulate and his 13-year-old daughter were seriously injured inside their home, and his wife suffered a miscarriage following the attack. We must call the international community's attention to the continuing threats by Israel in this regard, including by the chief of the Israeli army, who recently declared that the occupying forces "will have to take significant aggressive action in the Gaza Strip". We call for all efforts to bring to an end this Israeli blockade and violence against the Palestinian people.

Today, we also condemn Israel's rejection of an official Palestinian request to transfer the former political prisoner Amal Jumaa (41) to Jordan for urgently needed medical treatment. Amal was one of the women prisoners freed in the prisoner exchange of October 2011. During her years in imprisonment, Amal suffered from grave medical negligence that caused chronic illnesses that require immediate medical attention. Clearly, the ban on this woman's basic right to access adequate health care is in flagrant violation of international law and Israel's obligations as an occupying Power.

In addition to the aforementioned illegal actions, Israel, the occupying Power, has renewed its decision to continue robbing the Palestinian people of their tax revenues, as reflected in the recent announcement to continue withholding Palestine's November tax revenues. We condemn this action as an outrageous act of piracy and political extortion of the Palestinian people and their leadership. This is

Palestinian money that Israel is obliged to transfer to the Palestinian Authority in accordance with signed agreements. In this connection, we reiterate our call on the international community to ensure that this seizure of Palestinian revenues is ended without preconditions.

We conclude our letter by expressing our grave concern about and absolute rejection of the continued Israeli campaign of incitement against the Palestinian leadership, particularly President Mahmoud Abbas. Most recently, the Israeli Finance Minister likened the legitimate and multilateral Palestinian efforts to secure the Palestinian people's natural and historic right to statehood and self-determination to "terror attacks". The Minister, who also described President Abbas as "dangerous" and called him an "enemy", also announced: "It's not enough to halt the funds; we need to take additional [punitive] measures." Such incitement, which constitutes a serious threat to the President's life and is raising tensions between the two sides, cannot continue to be tolerated. In this regard, the Palestinian leadership holds Israel, the occupying Power, fully responsible for this reckless and hostile campaign.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 410 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 2 November 2011 (A/ES-10/538-S/2011/680) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations